

Living Heritage



WOODLAND
TRUST

The Woodland Trust legacy newsletter • No 3 • February 2002

Call to action against climate change

WILL ADVICE • TOP FIVE WOODS • ANCIENT WOODLAND EVENT • DALES UPDATE
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS • WITTY WILLS



Phenologists are asked to record when they first see frogspawn and tadpoles

Photograph: Colin Varnell

Quick wit

A Yorkshireman had ordered a tombstone for his late wife, to include the words 'She Was Thine'. When he went to see the finished work, he was horrified to see that it read 'She Was Thin'. He complained to the engraver: "You've left out the e".

A correction was promised and on his second visit the inscription read 'E! She Was Thin'.

People power needed to counter climate change

"The records we are gathering will be an invaluable legacy to leave future generations."

Nature is changing faster than at any other time in history.

Climate change is a global reality and the Woodland Trust has identified it as the biggest single threat to the UK's already scarce woodland resources.

If no action is taken to protect UK woods, our beloved countryside could look very different within our lifetimes. A 2001 Woodland Trust report warns that within 30 years, beech woods could be dying in south east England because of drought; new pests and diseases could take hold and many woodland plants and animals become rare – even extinct.

This is a chilling "worst case" scenario but as chief executive Mike Townsend points out: "Climate change is already having an impact on our woods and on the plants and animals that live there.

"Oak trees are coming into leaf 10 days earlier than in the 1980s, amphibians are spawning earlier and migrant birds are arriving sooner with some remaining throughout the winter instead of flying south."

Action is needed now, he explains.

"We need to think dynamically and take action at a landscape scale, working in partnership with other landowners.

"We need to protect, restore and extend ancient woods to create large, self-sustaining wooded landscapes, buffered by complementary habitats such as heathland and downland and crucially, less intensive forms of agriculture. But we cannot do this without greater public understanding – and of course funds." Legacies help us to plan our work for years to come which is essential for long-term and large scale projects such as this. Please see the *Safe as houses* article later in the newsletter for more information.

Our major phenology survey, in partnership with the Centre for Ecology and



Blackthorn in spring

Photograph: Roy Battell

Hydrology, examines the timing of Nature's events. With nearly 12,000 recorders, it is the largest survey of its kind in the world.

Recorders are asked to note the growing season for trees and flowers, the arrival times of bird migrants and the timing of bird, amphibian and insect activity in woods, gardens, parks and even high streets. A special phenology website includes records dating back to 1736 and now has a live tracking system which illustrates seasonal events as they happen.

Project manager Jill Attenborough said: "Thanks to our recorders the project has accumulated a mass of information that's much more valuable than the earliest known recorders can have realised. These records will be an invaluable legacy to leave future generations."

Retired schoolmaster Hugh Beggs, 60 and his wife Bridget, 58, from Sale in Manchester signed up as phenology recorders after keeping a "kitchen calendar" record for more than 20 years.

Explained Hugh: "We record the date on which the first daffodil comes out in spring and overall it's come forward perhaps 10 days."

More spring recorders are needed, particularly in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. A simple form is available from the Woodland Trust on 0500 959554. Better still, record online at www.phenology.org.uk

Is it time you acquired “Will power”?

“Death, taxes and childbirth. There is no convenient time for any of them!” Margaret Mitchell (1900-1949). It is often the thought of our own death that prompts us to wonder about the contents of our will. This shouldn't be the case. Will revision should be done on a regular basis, just like a health check – it's that important.

Increases in the value of your house and investments might prompt you to revise your will to reduce or even eliminate the possibility of paying Inheritance Tax. A new child may not inherit unless your will especially caters for that eventuality; the death of a beneficiary could mean a partial intestacy while the death of an executor could mean the Court appointing an Administrator to deal with your affairs. This could be anyone – from a residuary

legatee to a creditor – not a wholly satisfactory situation.

The nature of personal relationships has changed. Having a partner who you live with, getting married, being separated or divorced may all have an impact on the effectiveness of your existing will.

Generally marriage automatically revokes any will made by either party before the marriage, unless it is stated specifically that the will is made in anticipation of marriage to a particular person and that it is not to be revoked by the marriage. Furthermore, if a person – the testator – who has made a will, is later divorced and dies without revising their will, in most cases, the will will be administered as if the divorced spouse had predeceased the testator. This could result in

intestacy and any appointment of the former spouse as Executor will lapse.

Another issue to bear in mind in the light of current lifestyles is that, for an unmarried partner to inherit, they must be specifically mentioned in the will. They have no automatic right to inherit under the English rules of intestacy, which will be applied if you do not leave a will.

People move away; children grow up; inflation can erode the value of fixed money legacies; tax changes can alter the effect of your will. So please make an entry on your new 2002 calendar to review your will. If you need further help, contact the Woodland Trust for leaflets on suggested wording for your will, intestacy laws in England or Scotland and gifts of land or woodland.



Cwm George Woods, Vale of Glamorgan

Photograph: Woodland Trust Picture Library

Creating beautiful memories for tomorrow's generation

Retired teacher Rachel Minshall remembered the Woodland Trust in her recently updated will because, she says woods have so enriched her life that she wants others to experience the same kind of joy.

Now 94, Mrs. Minshall contacted the Woodland Trust to share memories of her childhood in the Welsh valleys when, as one of eight children of the village blacksmith, she spent hours in woods on the mountains.

She said: “We had very little money but we were never poor because we had the woods. We'd go collecting blackberries and acorn-popping and our father taught

us the names of the flowers. I am so thankful we were born into a home where we all loved the happiness of this beautiful world and could share it with others.”

She added: “That was something I tried to pass on to my dear little infants when I taught in Cheshire. We had lovely nature walks which are often in my memory now.”

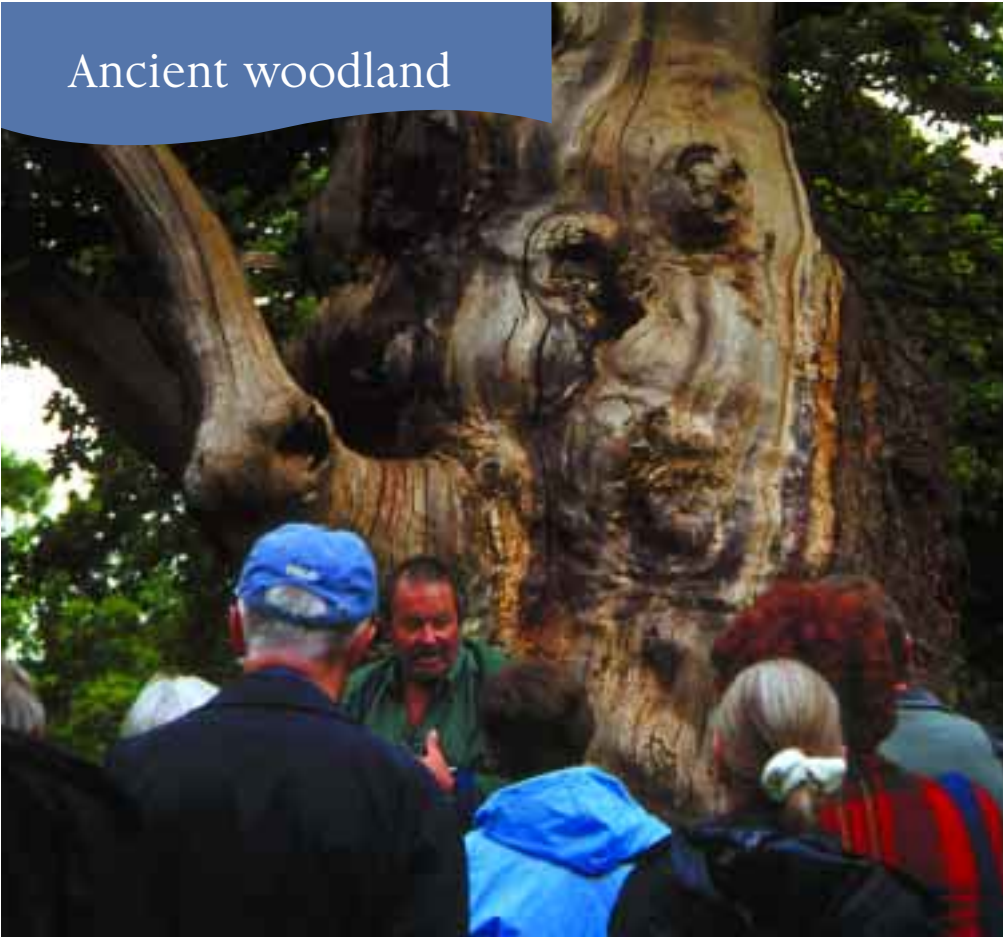
A Woodland Trust member for nearly 20 years, she bought her present home in Mountain Ash, Mid-Glamorgan, to be close to the woods. She says: “It has been lovely to hear of the work of the Woodland Trust and it's so sad to hear of so much beauty being destroyed.”

Question

Although I intend to leave the Woodland Trust a legacy, when I write my will I would also like to leave a small token of gratitude to my neighbour's daughter for all her help during a recent illness. Could you explain the best way to do this? Although she is unmarried at the moment, she may have married by the time of my death and I fear a change of surname might mean she would not be entitled to benefit.

Answer

There is no need to alter your will if a beneficiary changes their name – as long as they are clearly identifiable as the person you intended to benefit when you made the will. If your neighbour's daughter marries, she will simply need to produce her marriage certificate to prove that she was the person you named in your will. It is always useful to include the address of beneficiaries in wills, even if they change, for identification purposes.



Ted Green enthuses about ancient trees at Windsor Great Park

Photograph: Alison Chapman

Ted separates the woods from the ancient trees

The Woodland Trust had the chance to thank and enlighten some valued supporters with two informal fact-finding events at Windsor Great Park.

National veteran tree expert Ted Green provided an expert view of the subject for more than 80 enthusiastic supporters, many having pledged legacies to the Trust.

“So many of our supporters give generously to the Woodland Trust but our relationship is inevitably long-distance. This was a perfect opportunity to help bring part of our work alive for them and it proved very successful,” explained regional development manager James Underhill.

Windsor Great Park is increasingly recognised as Europe’s most important ancient oak tree site. With a continuity of trees stretching back into history, the younger trees are ready to take over as ancients of the future. Ted set the scene for the group with an illustrated talk on ancient and veteran trees before touring the site with his enthusiastic audience.

“Ted was in turn funny and controversial, challenging people’s perceptions and the response was wonderful,” added James.

Among the points he helped to bring to life were:

- Although veteran and ancient trees are often viewed as the same, there is a difference. Veteran trees are those trees living beyond their normal economic life. Ancient trees are those of greater antiquity, frequently hollow and containing a high proportion of dead wood.
- Ancient trees have special conservation value, providing unique habitats for a plethora of wildlife species.
- Many specialist woodland species, including over 70 species of lichen, are almost wholly confined to old growth stands.
- Ancient trees also exist in the wider countryside, where their isolation makes them and the species they support, especially vulnerable.
- Ancient trees can be important cultural features with strong historic links – like Sherwood Forest’s “Major Oak”.
- The Woodland Trust wants positive action to conserve ancient trees and the wildlife they support.
- The UK has more ancient trees than any other European country but here they don’t enjoy the same legal protection.



Safe as houses

Faced with the unprecedented threat of climate change, the Woodland Trust is working to put ancient woodland on a more sustainable footing – for example, by linking woods and planting trees around ancient woodland.

Safe as houses? Not yet – but the support of people who leave all or part of the value of their homes to the Woodland Trust to create new woodland, can help make a tangible difference. The current average house value of £100,000 – if bequeathed – could be doubled by means of grants and other donations.

Depending on location, the cost of establishing and caring for one hectare (2.5 acres) of woodland ranges from £2,000 to £15,000. So subject to any geographical preferences you may have, we could help to give an idea of how much new woodland you could create and how many trees you could be helping to sustain. Imagine, your house could effectively be “transformed” into a low-maintenance home for literally thousands of species!

If you have no geographical preference, we would use your bequest to help our most urgent project at the time and where it can make the greatest difference.

For further information, contact Susan Miller at the Woodland Trust on 01476 581129.

A programme of events is already being planned for 2002 including another veteran trees special with Ted Green. Further information about the programme is available from special projects officer **Anna Fisher** on **01476 581142**.

Top five woods

Legacies from Woodland Trust supporters are helping the Woodland Trust to change the face of the countryside for the better, so we thought "What better way to say thank you than to show you where and how your gifts are helping us to make a difference". So here we highlight the favourite five...

▼ **Miltonrigg Wood** near Brampton, Cumbria is complex and diverse, stretching across some 154 acres with semi-mature oak, ash, beech and occasional chestnut trees. Popular with visitors, it provides a habitat for red squirrel and roe deer, kestrel, sparrow hawk and tawny owl as well as great spotted woodpecker, redstart and coaltit.



▼ **Woodhouse Hill Wood** near Frodsham in Cheshire is well worth a visit. The 30-acre site has long been a popular leisure retreat for the public. With oak, ash and birch, enviable views and a good system of footpaths it also has an Iron Age hill fort which is a scheduled ancient monument. Nearby, the 40-acre Woodhouse Hill Extension provides surprisingly good views towards the Cheshire Plain.



► **Watkins Wood** near Kingsbridge is an attractive site, covering some 198 acres and set within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in South Devon.



◀ **Beautiful Glen Finglas**, in the heart of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park, is the largest of our woods at a mammoth 10,000 acres. A tourist magnet for more than 200 years, we are working to transform it into one of Scotland's largest native broadleaved forests.



▲ **Moat Wood** at East Hoathly, near Uckfield in East Sussex holds the promise of unexplored history, taking its name from an interesting moat feature. The 24-acre wood is mixed broadleaf and dominated by oak, hornbeam and birch, with sweet chestnut and a small area of planted pine.





Ashley Jackson with Woodland Trust Operations Director, Norman Starks

Photograph: Justin Slee

Picture of hope for the Dales

Acclaimed international artist Ashley Jackson unveiled our ambitious campaign to protect and restore native broadleaf trees in a well loved landscape.

The Yorkshire Dales Landscape project, launched thanks to generous legacies from Sidney Clifford Webb and Anne Appleton, aims to ensure that we do not lose the remaining treasured one per cent but also make it more sustainable whilst increasing the overall amount of native woodland in the Dales.



Woodland Trust supporter Dame Judi Dench said: "It worries me that, bit by bit, this precious woodland is disappearing. By supporting this project everyone can play an important part in revitalising it before it's too late."

Working with farmers, landowners and other agencies, the Trust has already launched schemes at Translands Gill in

Malhamdale and Faw Wood in Wensleydale.

With a target of £200,000 more funds are urgently needed. Thanks to partnership agreements, almost every £1 donated will generate £3. And, supporters making donations of £150 or more, will receive one of 500 limited edition prints of Ashley's exclusive watercolour of Wharfedale.

The reshaping of the Yorkshire Dales is an exciting example of how legacies are making a lasting difference to our woodland heritage. The Trust would be delighted to credit individuals who make substantial contributions to similar projects – a legacy of £100,000 could help start a similar scheme elsewhere.

For more information, visit www.woodland-trust.org.uk/yorkshiredales or call project development officer Judith Stuttard on 01484 609510.

"But indeed, it is not so much for its beauty that the forest makes a claim upon men's hearts, as for that subtle something, that quality of air, that emanates from the old trees, that so wonderfully changes and renews a weary spirit."

Robert Louis Stevenson

We can help you

Leaving a legacy to the Woodland Trust does not have to mean negotiating a complex legal obstacle course. Our legacy department will be happy to help you with any information, advice or practical assistance that will smooth your way through the entire process.

Please contact Susan Miller or Vicky Furnival or if you would prefer, we would be happy to arrange for a member of staff to call and see you at home. Alternatively, why not ask for our free advice leaflet, *Wording for Wills*.

Call Susan or Vicky on 01476 581129 or e-mail: susan-miller@woodland-trust.org.uk vickyfurnival@woodland-trust.org.uk



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